

SEATTLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Information Bulletin #2003-4



Fire Emergency Procedures for Public Assemblies

This bulletin describes fire emergency planning requirements for new public assembly occupancies with an occupant load of over 300 persons, in accordance with Article 13 of the Seattle Fire Code. *These same requirements are also recommended for all existing public assembly occupancies.*

Public Assemblies

New public assembly occupancies with an occupant load of over 300 people are required to develop a fire emergency plan, train staff members in fire response procedures and conduct employee fire drills.

Public assembly occupancies used exclusively for religious worship with an occupant load of less than 2,000 are exempted.

Plan Development

A fire emergency plan should be developed that considers any special characteristics of your building and the people who work or visit there. Each plan should be reviewed and updated annually by facility management. The fire emergency plan should include the following information:

- The procedure for reporting fire emergencies and notifying, relocating and evacuating occupants.
- The duties of staff members during fire emergencies.
- The locations of portable fire extinguishers, other manual fire extinguishing equipment, manual fire alarm pull stations, and fire alarm control panels.
- The posting of floor plans throughout the building, identifying the primary and

secondary routes of evacuation from each room or portion of the occupancy.

- The procedures for evacuating guests who can not use stairs and the locations of interior areas of refuge.
- The location of designated outside assembly area(s) for all building occupants.

Staff Training

Well-trained employees are critical to the successful evacuation of a public assembly. Employees must receive emergency evacuation training as part of new employee orientation, and annual training thereafter. Employees should be familiar with fire alarm signals, and safe use of portable fire extinguishers.

Employees must understand that it is their responsibility to initiate and guide an emergency evacuation of the facility when a fire emergency occurs. Upon hearing the fire alarm, employees should turn off all music and turn on the lights. This will make it easier for guests to hear the fire alarm and the evacuation instructions being given by staff. These directions should guide guests to the exits via the stairs, not elevators. Once outside it is important to move guests away from the building.

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Fire Drills

Quarterly fire drills (every 120 days) are required for employees of public assemblies with occupancies over 300. Keep a record of your building's drills. This should include the date and time of each drill, as well as the name of the person conducting the drill.

False Alarms

In the event the fire alarm sounds and staff are able to verify that is a false alarm or malicious prank, call 911 immediately to report these findings to the fire department dispatcher. Do not silence the alarm without dispatcher permission. Do not reset the fire alarm panel until after receiving permission from the arriving fire department personnel.

Additional Resources

The Seattle Fire Department Public Education Office provides the following free assistance:

- Courtesy review of fire emergency plans.
- Information bulletins, fire fact sheets and staff training materials. Call the Public Education Office at 206-386-1337 or visiting on-line at www.cityofseattle.net/fire